



# Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

<http://www.townofboone.net/>

~ Agenda ~

Jane Shook  
828-268-6960

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Tuesday, November 14, 2023

3:00 PM Planning and Inspections Conference Room

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**The public may attend the meeting in-person at the Planning and Inspections Conference at 680 West King Street, Suite C or online via WebEx (a video conferencing software).**

*To participate using WebEx, either online or by phone, please email Planning and Inspections at [planning@townofboone.net](mailto:planning@townofboone.net) or call 828-268-6960, and you will be provided with an email invitation to the meeting. All requests for an invitation must be submitted no later than one hour before the meeting is scheduled to begin.*

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Adoption of Agenda**
- III. Public Comment**
- IV. Boone Cemetery Interpretative Panels - Review of Final Draft Text**  
**Draft Panel Text - November 14, 2023**
- V. Adjournment**

## REVISED Panel #1: Boone Cemetery (November 2023 Final Draft)

The land historically associated with the Boone Cemetery was once owned by Benjamin Council, Sr., who probably inherited the land from his father, Jordan Council, Sr., upon the latter's death in 1838. The earliest burials here were likely Councils and others from interrelated families, as well as people enslaved by these families prior to the American Civil War. As was the practice throughout the United States before the 1960s, this cemetery was segregated, with Black people buried in the eastern part and White people buried in the western part.<sup>1</sup> At times, a fence separated the two sections.

By the 1880s, locals treated this area as the town cemetery, even though it remained on privately owned land. Overcrowding became an issue in the 1930s. By the 1950s, the cemetery was rarely used for new burials as both Black and White residents developed new burial spaces outside of Boone's downtown. In 2015, the Town of Boone acquired both sections of the cemetery. Since then, the Town has made several improvements to provide for the cemetery's long-term preservation.

Resting here are many of Boone's elected officials, civic and cultural leaders, and veterans of the nation's wars, including those who fought on both sides of the Civil War. The Boone Cemetery remains a sacred space for reflection on the lives and history of those interred here. [222 words]

[Aerial image of Boone Cemetery from ca. 1907] *Caption:* Detail crop showing the Boone Cemetery from the northwest, circa 1907. Image courtesy of the Historic Boone Collection, Digital Watauga Project. [21 words]

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<sup>1</sup> In this sentence, replaced two uses of "section" with the word "part" for variety.

## REVISED Panel #2: A Divided Cemetery (November 2023 Final Draft)

The stone line at your feet marks the fence line that once divided the Black section of the cemetery to the east from the White section to the west. Racial segregation of gravesites was common in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Slavery formally ended in 1865, but widespread segregation, including the segregation of the Councill Cemetery, did not. In the century that followed, locals usually called the cemetery's east section the "Colored Cemetery" and the west section the "City Cemetery." Cemetery trustees and town officials maintained the western part but often neglected the eastern part.<sup>3</sup>

On at least two occasions, local civic leaders erected a fence separating the two sections and fully enclosing the White portion.<sup>4</sup> The first fence, constructed in 1898 was made of planks. In 1958, town officials took over maintenance of the privately owned west section and constructed a chain-link fence.<sup>5</sup> In 2015, the Town of Boone acquired both sections and removed the fence that physically and symbolically divided the cemetery.

More than 265 known burials in the White section have graves marked by a headstone bearing the names, dates, and often an epitaph for the deceased. Relatively few gravesites are unmarked. By contrast, most graves in the Black section went unmarked or were designated with fieldstones and temporary markers, many of which have since been lost or displaced. Today, only four original headstones remain. Notable exceptions are the three replacement headstones for Union soldiers buried here in 1865.

In 2016, a ground-penetrating radar survey located nearly 200 unmarked graves in the Black section. Because these graves could not be associated with a specific person, each was later marked by a flat fieldstone. The names of those known to be buried here are recorded on the large memorial installed by the Junaluska Heritage Association in 2017. [297 words]

[Aerial image of Boone Cemetery, circa 1950] *Caption:* Aerial image of Boone Cemetery from the northeast, circa 1950. Image courtesy of the Palmer Blair Collection, Digital Watauga Project. [20 words]

<sup>2</sup> EWP recommends inserting "until the 1960s" after "United States"; OR combining the two sentences to read, "Slavery formally ended in 1865, but widespread racial segregation, including segregation of burial sites like the Councill Cemetery, remained common in the United States until the 1960s." [Does not change word count; if merged sentence is adopted, will need to change "In the century that followed" in the next sentence to "During that period," which trims two words.]

<sup>3</sup> In this sentence, replaced two uses of "section" with "part" for variety.

<sup>4</sup> In this sentence, replaced one instance of "section" with "portion" for variety.

<sup>5</sup> EWP recommends adding "perimeter" for clarity, to read, "constructed a chain-link perimeter fence."

**REVISED SIGN #1: Boone Cemetery Rules<sup>6</sup>**  
**(October 2023 Draft)**

- The Boone Cemetery is owned by the Town of Boone.
- The cemetery is open to the public year-round from dawn to dusk.
- Desecration of gravesites in any form is a violation of North Carolina law.
- Visitors are reminded that this is sacred space and not an area for recreation or sport.
- Be respectful of other visitors.
- Grave markers are unstable, old, heavy, and fragile.
  - Do not sit, stand, climb, or lean on any grave marker.
  - Do not attempt to perform a “rubbing” of a gravestone.
  - Do not attempt to clean grave markers.
  - Children must be supervised at all times.
- Do not remove or disturb grave goods including flags, flowers, small stones, or artifacts left by mourners.
- Pets are prohibited (or “Pets must be on a leash and cleaned up after”).<sup>7</sup>
- For additional information, contact the Boone Town Manager at (828) 268-6200.

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<sup>6</sup> This draft closely follows the previous proposal for a sign on a post (as opposed to a third interpretive panel) that would be mounted outside the cemetery gates.

<sup>7</sup> To be discussed. Note that St. Philip’s and the Salem Moravian Graveyard prohibit pets, while Bonaventure and the Unitarian Church in Charleston permit them.